



International
Labour
Organization

Women's Entrepreneurship Development (WED) in South Africa

The Abafazi Incubator Project

Women in South Africa continue to face gender-based barriers to starting and expanding their businesses. These barriers include: discriminatory cultural practices; limited mobility, voice and representation; and, disproportionate shares of family and household responsibilities and a lack of maternity protection. These discriminatory factors, combined with social exclusion based on sex, contribute to women entrepreneurs' difficulty in accessing key resources, such as: commercial credit from formal financial service providers; lucrative markets, over traditional local markets; technology and information to establish and grow businesses; national incentives in small enterprise development (gender blind private sector development, fiscal policies, and legislation); and, training and education for small enterprise development.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Partners:

Coca-Cola Fortune (CCF); Businesswomen's Association of South Africa: Port Elizabeth, Bloemfontein and Polokwane Chapters (BWA); Tradelane Training and Development & Associates (TTD); The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD).

Beneficiary Countries:

South Africa

Timeframe:

January 2009 – May 2012

Budget:

USD 386,000

THE RESPONSE

The WED programme focuses on establishing an enabling environment for women's entrepreneurship initiatives through increasing their access to service providers whilst improving income-generation, productivity and competitiveness. This is achieved through building the capacity of governments, employers' organizations, trade unions, and civil society organizations to support women entrepreneurs at growth stages.

ILO-WED considers fostering thoughtful partnerships as essential to developing women's entrepreneurship through their unique ability to mobilize funds, ensure the sustainability and use of ILO tools and approaches, and generate new opportunities to collaborate.

In cooperation with the ILO-WED project in South Africa three local stakeholders in the form of a business association (BWASA), a foundation (Coca-Cola Fortune), and a business development service provider (Tradelane Training & Development) forged a partnership which has successfully continued even after the closure of the ILO-WED project and its direct support.

The resulting Abafazi Incubator Project, launched in 2011, helps to ensure women continue to access ILO tools and approaches. Over a 9 -12 month support period it trains women to utilize a variety of these tools including "Expand your Business", "Action my Business. Growth", "Women Entrepreneurs' Association Capacity Building" and "Improve your Advocacy Skills". The development of viable growth plans through coaching and mentorship is also supported.

RESULTS

Within South Africa and under the scope of this partnership the following results have been achieved:

- The successful completion of two rounds of the Abafazi Incubator, leading to the launching of a third round in 2013, demonstrating its sustainability;

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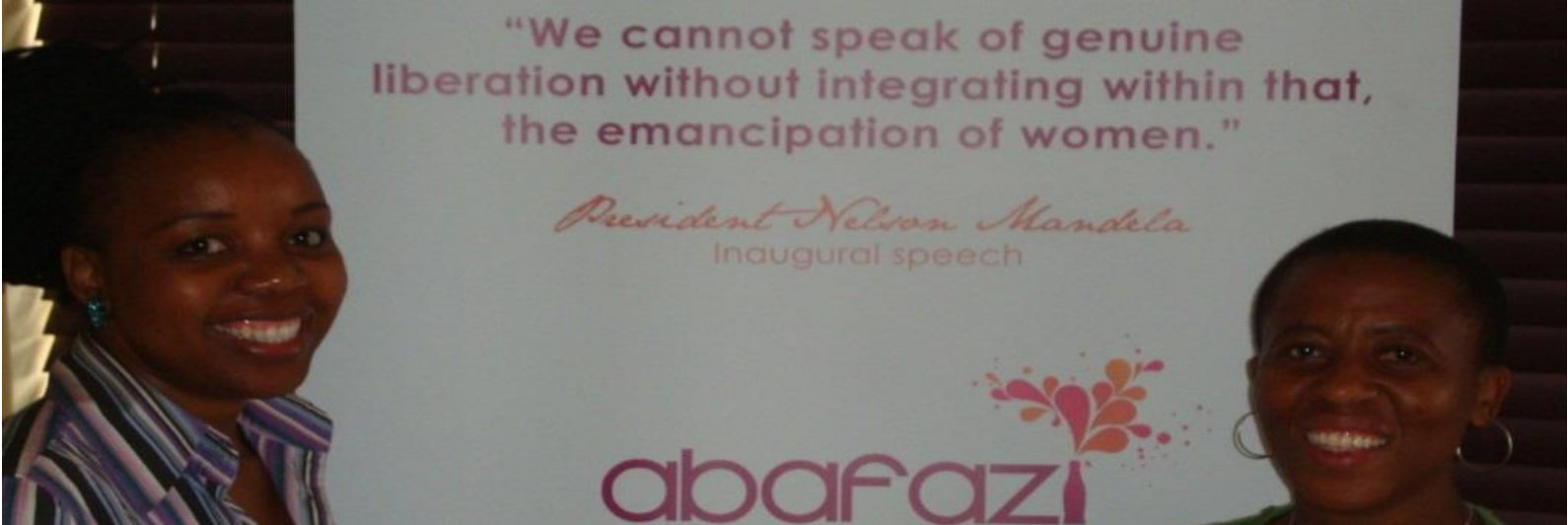
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"As a business we realized that with all of the other CSR initiatives we had at the time, there was an opportunity in the entrepreneurship category and to have it as one of our anchor projects. We are very heartened by the work done by the BWA and the phenomenal women they have as part of their regional business achievers and we thought it would be an ideal opportunity to partner with them and the ILO who came very credibly and highly recommended with their scope of programmes that they've got"

Amber Anderson – Coca-Cola Fortune."

- 24 women entrepreneurs have completed the 9 – 12 month journey which equips them with a skill set while developing viable growth plans with the support of ongoing coaching and mentorship;
- In addition to the identification of the initial 24 women entrepreneurs BWA has been able to identify a further 20 potential women entrepreneurs through its annual Regional Achievers Award to participate in the incubator;
- The Incubator has successfully grown each round: 6 women entrepreneurs participated in round one; 18 in round two; and 20 in round three;
- The development of women entrepreneur ambassadors who can trumpet the possibilities for other aspirational women entrepreneurs. This multiplier effect is possibly one of the biggest contributions made by the project.

More widely, the ILO-WED programme has been active in over 25 countries in 5 world regions (Africa, the Arab states, Asia and the Pacific, Central Asia and the Caucasus, and Latin America), and so far the programme has supported hundreds of thousands of women entrepreneurs and assisted dozens of governments and stakeholders.

BENEFITS OF PARTNERING

The ILO has access to a network of local, national and regional women's groups and business associations, and a network of local, national and regional business trainers and partners accredited in ILO tools and approaches for sustainability.

This is in addition to access to a wide knowledge base, an array of tools, and technical expertise in women's entrepreneurship development from ILO enterprise and gender experts.

In particular, with this partnership, a suite of entrepreneurship tools, training packages, and capacity building guides adapted to suit the local context and needs of women, youth and marginalized groups were made available. For example, TTD became certified in ILO tools such as "Expand your Business", "Action my Business Growth", "Women Entrepreneurs' Association Capacity Building" and "Improve your Advocacy Skills", thus equipping them additional capacity as a business development service provider.

Furthermore, as a result of the partnership, through its selection process and Regional Achievers Award, BWA was able to offer additional relevant opportunities to women entrepreneurs, thus supporting the organization to further its objectives.



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